

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

Claims 1-59 (Cancelled)

60. (New) A method of unloading an isoelectric gel from a gel tube, said method comprising:

positioning a flexible plunger member in a first end of the gel tube, said flexible plunger member sealing against an inner surface of a bore of the gel tube, and
sliding said flexible plunger member through the bore toward a second end of the gel tube and unloading the gel from the gel tube.

61. (New) The method of claim 60, wherein said flexible plunger member is a flexible rubber ball having an outer dimension to fit in said bore and contact the inner surface of the bore to form a seal.

62. (New) The method of claim 60, comprising the step of applying an axial force to said flexible plunger member to slide said flexible plunger member toward the second end of the gel tube.

63. (New) The method of claim 60, comprising the step of inserting a plunger rod into the first end of said bore to contact the flexible plunger member, and applying an axial force to the plunger rod to slide the flexible plunger member toward the second end of the gel tube and unload the gel.

64. (New) The method of claim 60, comprising the step of inserting a plunger rod into the first end of the bore to contact the flexible plunger member and manually forcing the plunger rod in an axial direction through the bore toward the second end of the gel tube to unload the gel.

65. (New) The method of claim 64, further comprising the step of coupling the first end of the gel tube in an axial passage of a housing, the axial passage being oriented for guiding the plunger rod through the tube.

66. (New) The method of claim 65, wherein said housing includes a stop member in the axial passage, said method comprising abutting the first end of the gel tube against the stop member.

67. (New) A method of unloading an electrophoresis gel from a gel tube, said gel tube having a substantially cylindrical shape defining a bore with a first open end and a second open end and containing the electrophoresis gel therein, said method comprising:

positioning a flexible spherical member in the first end of the bore of the gel tube, the spherical member having a dimension to slide within the bore of the tube, and
applying an axial force to the spherical member sufficient to move the spherical member to the second end of the tube and unload the gel from the tube through the second end.

68. (New) The method of claim 67, wherein said spherical member has a dimension to contact an inner surface of said tube.

69. (New) The method of claim 67, wherein said flexible spherical member is a silicone rubber ball.

70. (New) The method of claim 67, comprising the step of inserting a plunger rod into the first end of the gel tube to contact the spherical member and applying an axial force to said plunger rod to force said spherical member toward said second end of said tube to unload said gel.

71. (New) The method of claim 70, said method comprising manually applying said axial force to said plunger rod.

72. (New) The method of claim 71, further comprising the step of coupling the first end of the gel tube to a housing, the housing having an axial passage for guiding the plunger rod.

73. (New) The method of claim 72, wherein said housing has a stop member in said axial passage, and said method comprising inserting said first end of said tube into said axial passage to abut said stop member.

74. (New) A method of unloading an electrophoresis gel from a gel tube, the gel tube having a substantially tubular shape with an internal bore with a first open end and a second open end and containing the electrophoresis gel therein, said method comprising:

placing a flexible and resilient ball in said first end of said bore, the ball having an outer dimension to contact an inner surface of the bore;

inserting a rod into the first end of the bore to contact the resilient ball; and

moving said rod through the bore from said first end to the second end to unload the gel from the tube.

75. (New) The method of claim 74, comprising the step of manually applying an axial force to the rod to move said rod through the bore to unload the gel.

76. (New) The method of claim 74, further comprising the step of coupling the first end of the gel tube to a housing, the housing having an axial passage for guiding the rod.

77. (New) The method of claim 76, wherein said housing has a stop member in said axial passage, and said method comprising inserting the first end of said gel tube into the axial passage to abut the stop member.

78. (New) The method of claim 74, wherein the flexible and resilient ball has a dimension to form a seal against the inner surface of the bore.